

REMARKS

Pursuant to the non-final Office Action mailed July 10, 2006, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. To further prosecution of this application, each of the issues raised in the Office Action is addressed herein.

Claims 1-16 are currently pending in this application, of which Claims 1 and 16 are independent claims. The application as now presented is believed to be in allowable condition.

A. **Objections to the Specification**

In the Office Action, the specification was objected to due to minor informalities. Accordingly, the specification has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that objections to the specification have been obviated.

B. **Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112**

Claims 1-16 were objected to under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, the Office Action indicates that neither the specification nor the drawings enablingly explain the flow path from ports 20, 21 to channels 17, 18a, 18b, or how the control element 25 controls flow between channels 22, 23a, 23b.

One of the objects of the present invention is to create a distributor module 12 (Figures 1-3) that enables changes in the routing of pressure medium between supply ducts 20, 21 and pilot control ducts 18a, 18b on a valve cluster 11 through the use of a control element 25 (paragraphs 5 and 17).

The distributor module 12 and control element 25 will first be discussed. A supply duct section 22 and pilot supply duct sections 23a and 23b (Figures 3 and 4) of the distributor module 12 are designed to couple to supply duct 17 and pilot control ducts 18a and 18b of the valve cluster 11, respectively (Figure 1 and 3). That is, when the distributor module 12 is mounted on the valve cluster 11, the duct sections 22, 23a, 23b of the distributor module 12 are preferably in-line with the corresponding ducts 17, 18a, 18b of the valve cluster 11 at a mounting area 26 (paragraph 44). This enables pressure medium to pass from the valve cluster 11 into the distributor module 12 (paragraph 41).

An interface 24 on the distributor module 12 selectively connects the three duct sections 22, 23a, 23b with one another. The interface 24 is provided with a control element 25 (Figures 2 and 3) that enables the use to select different switching conditions that connect the three duct sections 22, 23a, 23b together in different configurations (paragraph 42). Figure 4 shows that the interface 24 is divided into three sectors 27a, 27b, 27c, into which one of the duct section 22, 23a, and 23b opens. The interface sectors 27a, 27b, 27c are separated by transverse interface partitions 28.

The control element 25 is preferably a rotary switch mounted on the interface 24 (Figures 2 and 3). The rotary switch includes three control sectors 30 (Figures 3 and 4) that

compliment the three interface sectors 27a, 27b, 27c on the distributor module 12. The three control sectors 30 of the control element 25 are divided by transverse control partitions 33.

It is important to note that when the control element 25 is rotated such that a transverse interface partition 28 lines up with a transverse control partition 33, a seal is produced that isolates adjacent sectors in the distributor module 12 and control element 25 on either side of the aligned transverse interface partition 28 and transverse control partition 33 (paragraph 45).

In general, the flow of pressure medium enters the supply duct 20, which leads to supply duct 17 in the supply plate 19. Once in supply duct 17, the pressure medium flows to supply duct section 22 in the distributor module 12 (Figures 3 and 4). At this point, pressure medium in the supply duct section 22 is directed to one, both, or neither of the duct sections 23a, 23b of the distributor module 12 by selecting the position of the control element 25 (paragraph 49).

For example, if control element 25 is in a first position, the results of which are shown in Figures 5I and 6I, the pressure medium P is fed from the supply duct connection 20 to the supply duct 17 on the valve cluster 11, and then to the supply duct section 22 of the distributor module 12. As shown in Figure 6I, the interface sector 27a corresponding to supply duct section 22 is isolated from the other two interface sectors 27b, 27c (which connect to duct sections 23a, 23b shown in Figure 4) since the transverse interface partitions 28 on either side of interface section 27a are aligned with the corresponding transverse

control partitions 33 of the control element 25 so that passage of pressure medium to the adjacent interface sectors 27b, 27c is prevented (paragraph 49).

Supply of pressure medium in the first position of the control element 25 is preferably provided from the pilot control duct connection 21 on the supply plate 19 (Figure 1) so that pilot pressure medium flows into pilot control supply duct 18b of the valve cluster 11 and then to the pilot control section 23b of the distributor module 12. From there the pilot pressure medium flows into corresponding interface sector 27c at the interface 24. The pressure medium is allowed to enter interface sector 27b through a flow bridge 29 formed by misalignment of the transverse control partition 33 and transverse interface partition 28 between sectors 27b and 27c shown in Figure 6I (paragraph 51). Different flow paths are provided by the second, third, and fourth switching conditions shown in Figures 5II-IV and Figures 6II-IV, respectively (paragraphs 52-54).

Thus, in direct response to the inquiry in the Office Action, pressure medium flows from supply duct connection 20 to supply duct 17 in the supply plate 19, followed by flowing to duct section 22 in the distributor module 12. By action of the control element 25 in locating interface sectors 27a, 27b, 27c in relation to corresponding duct sections 22, 23a, 23b, flow is selectively enabled or prevented from entering duct sections 23a, 23b, and thus corresponding ducts 18a, 18b, respectively.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below in the event further clarification of the specification is required. In

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view of the remarks provided above, it is requested that the rejection of Claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, be reconsidered and withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Favourable reconsideration of Claims 1-16 and allowance of pending Claims 1-16 are solicited.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this reply, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number provided below to discuss any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,



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